

**GOVERNOR JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM**

Friday, September 23, 2005

Hello this is Governor Jennifer Granholm.

One year ago this week, my administration launched the MI-Rx program to give Michigan citizens without health insurance access to affordable prescription drugs.

And today, I'm so pleased to announce that in the last 12 months, 30,000 uninsured seniors and people from working families have signed up for the MI-Rx prescription drug card. And that card is helping them to save hundreds of dollars a year on everyday medication.

The cost of prescriptions is such a huge burden on families in Michigan, and across America, where consumers are spending more than \$200 billion a year on pharmaceuticals. And with costs rising further at an incredible 12 percent annually, the MI-Rx program is an important way to help our citizens afford the prescriptions they need.

MI-Rx works just like a discount card at a grocery store. It's a totally free service that gives you a savings at the cash register – on average around 20 percent – and you can use the card at more than 2,000 neighborhood pharmacies statewide.

And unlike discount programs in other states, MI-Rx isn't just for seniors. If you are an uninsured family of four that makes \$56,000 a year, or if you're single and make less than \$28,000 a year, all you have to do is fill out a simple application to sign-up. You can find them at pharmacies across Michigan or you can call 866-755-6479 to apply.

With health care costs increasing at all levels, this is just one step we've taken to help consumers in Michigan.

In addition, my administration is fighting against any effort in Lansing or in Washington to cut funding for Medicaid. Medicaid is health care for children and seniors and people with disabilities and pregnant women. We cannot and will not turn our backs on those who need our help the most.

From the Upper Peninsula to Saginaw to Detroit, since 2003 we've also opened 14 new federally qualified health centers across the state. These are centers that provide health services for our most vulnerable citizens and they help to ensure that we continue to protect those seniors and those adults with disabilities and children who have no other way to get their health care.

Affordable health care is such a challenge across our nation. It's a challenge that I'm working on with my fellow governors and pushing the federal government to create a national solution – a uniquely American solution to the problem of so many uninsured citizens.

In a global economy, with our job provides, our business, struggling to compete with business from countries who do provide health care to their citizens, we must find a solution. In the richest nation in the world, we as a nation have to provide health care to all of our citizens, one way or another. It's a competitiveness issue – and frankly it is a moral issue.

But today, we in Michigan are taking immediate steps to address our health care challenge at home – to make sure that every senior, every child and every family has access to the services and the medication they need.

Thank you for listening.